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President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Al Bayati (Iraq), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 118 (*continued*)

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy

Report of the Secretary-General (A/62/898)

Draft resolution (A/62/L.48)

Mr. Adi (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like at the outset to extend my thanks to the President of the Assembly for holding this important meeting. My delegation would like to thank Mr. Gert Rosenthal, the Permanent Representative of Guatemala, for his efforts to facilitate negotiations on reaching a consensus on the draft resolution that will be adopted at the end of this meeting. My delegation would also like to align itself with the statements made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and by the Permanent Representative of Kuwait on behalf of the Arab Group.

I would like to emphasize the principles position of my country, which condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, whatever its source and whoever its perpetrators, be they individuals, groups or States. Since 1986, the Syrian Arab Republic has been a consistent pioneer in calling for the holding of an international conference to agree on a definition of terrorism. Such a definition would distinguish between terrorism and the right of peoples to self-determination and the struggle to achieve their independence, in order to preserve and safeguard the norms of international law from politicization and to protect just causes from any attempt to misinterpret and undermine them on the pretext of combating terrorism.

In the fight against terrorism, we have always striven to find a solid basis for genuine cooperation among all States within the framework of the resolutions of international legitimacy. We must prevent counter-terrorism efforts from being exploited for particular political gains, at the expense of just causes. Syria supports the consensus adoption of comprehensive, clear and unequivocal concepts in a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that cannot be easily utilized to serve dubious motives and agendas or to violate the fundamental principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in a manner that has nothing to do with combating terrorism.

Syria supports sincere international efforts to combat terrorism and to address its root causes. We emphasize the need to implement the measures set out in the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy to address the conditions and factors conducive to the spread of terrorism. I wish to reiterate that the Strategy does not obviate the need for a clear legal definition of terrorism that takes into account all aspects of that condemnable act and distinguishes it from the legitimate right of peoples to resist occupation and liberate their lands. Therefore, we call for the

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conclusion of negotiations on the draft comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Syria believes that, if the Strategy is to be successful, it must tackle the root causes of terrorism, among the most important of which is foreign occupation. Unfortunately, the Strategy does not contain any clear measures or implementable language to put an end to occupation. It fails to clearly define State terrorism and refers only briefly to that very important concept, whereas addressing terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including State terrorism, is a prerequisite for any global counter-terrorism strategy.

We believe that it is counterproductive to try to combat terrorism by using excessive force. Today, because of the use of excessive force and violence, terrorism has spread to areas where it was not found before. That is making the world less secure with every passing day — a reality that is felt most keenly in our region. While we call upon all States to cooperate in the fight against terrorism, we warn against the use of counter-terrorism as a pretext for exploiting the rights of peoples and for sowing hatred among religions, cultures and civilizations, rather than promoting dialogue among them for the benefit of all humanity.

In that context, I should like to emphasize that we reject all attempts to link terrorism to any particular religion, ethnic group, culture, language or nationality. The fight against international terrorism must be carried out in full conformity with the Charter and with the relevant provisions of human rights and international humanitarian law.

My delegation wishes to stress that the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy must be implemented in a comprehensive and non-selective manner. In that context, we should like to emphasize that the Strategy adopted as resolution 60/288 is a vital and active document that must be implemented in all its aspects as well as periodically reviewed and updated. My delegation would like to emphasize the central role of the General Assembly in the fight against terrorism. In that connection, we wish to recall that the Strategy is owned by all Member States and therefore that all of them must participate in all decisions concerning its full implementation.

My delegation believes that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force should continue to work within the mandate entrusted to it by the General Assembly and undertake its tasks after consulting with Member States and accepting their guidelines for its work. In that connection, my delegation believes that any meeting, event or activity concerning the Global Strategy should be carried out only after transparent discussions with all Member States within the framework of the United Nations. That would ensure the comprehensive implementation of all four pillars of the Strategy and would prevent politicization and partiality in such implementation.

With regard to the Secretary-General's planned symposium on the victims of terrorism, my country expresses its deep sympathy for the victims of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including the victims of State terrorism as well as those who have become victims of counter-terrorism measures that violate human rights or international humanitarian law. My delegation had hoped that preparations for the symposium would be carried out in a transparent, consensual and unhurried manner in order to achieve consensus, so that it would not undermine the noble principle of assisting the victims of terrorism from the humanitarian perspective.

When the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy was adopted in 2006, Syria joined the consensus, despite the critical comments made by my delegation and many others during the discussions. Those comments did not find their way into the document, which finally attracted a consensus because many participants were committed to the principle of consensus. Syria joined the international consensus because of its principled support for all counter-terrorism efforts and its understanding that any strategy would be an important tool in facilitating cooperation among States on such efforts.

Syria supports the draft resolution to be adopted at the end of this meeting. After participating actively in the initial discussions, we were very keen to ensure that the draft resolution would be more comprehensive and profound so that it would fully meet the concerns of many delegations, including my own, in particular with regard to the need to address the root causes of terrorism, including the illegitimate use of force, aggression and foreign occupation, the denial of the right of peoples to self-determination and the lack of social and economic justice.

Mr. Khaleel (Maldives): Let me begin by expressing my delegation's appreciation to the

President for convening this meeting of the General Assembly to review the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Let me also join previous speakers in congratulating Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala on the exemplary manner in which he facilitated the negotiations on the draft resolution (A/62/L.48) before us today. My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Terrorism has always haunted the human race in one form or another, yet never before have we witnessed such organized, frequent and lethal acts of terrorism, threatening international peace and security. The threat of terrorism is no longer restricted to certain countries or regions of the world. Acts of terrorism are affecting us all, irrespective of our physical size, economic strength, political power or military might. Thus, fighting the menace in all its forms and manifestations is the collective responsibility of the entire international community.

Today, a large part of the United Nations membership comprises small States, which often do not have the resources or the means to defend themselves from the new and emerging threats, including the many and varied forms of terrorism and the activities of organized crime. Some of today's terrorist organizations and organized transnational crime syndicates have at their disposal far greater resources and means than some of the small sovereign States Members of the United Nations.

As the members of this Assembly are well aware, two decades ago a group of armed terrorists from a neighbouring country launched an attack on the Maldives with the aim of invading and converting it into a terrorist safe haven and staging ground for terrorist activities against their own country. Ever since that fatal incident, which we quelled with the help of our good friend and ally, India, the Maldives has continued to advocate the need for effective multilateral cooperation to support small States in protecting their sovereignty and territorial integrity — an arrangement that could respond with urgency and commitment, without any bias, regardless of the strategic location, economic significance or political importance of the State.

The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy gives us much hope in that regard. The four pillars on which the Strategy is based and their universal acceptance constitute its strength. We are happy that the Strategy pays considerable attention to capacity-building and the creation of an enabling environment conducive to preventing and fighting against that menace.

The Maldives has consistently supported significant international measures aimed at combating international terrorism. We sincerely believe that acts of terrorism committed to instil fear and terror by whomever, wherever and for whatever purpose cannot be justified or condoned under any circumstances.

The Maldives is now a party to almost all major international conventions and protocols forming the international anti-terrorism regime. We are also a party to the Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and its Additional Protocol. We believe that closer cooperation at the regional level is necessary in order to set up effective security arrangements and legal frameworks that complement our efforts at the international level. We hope that the SAARC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, adopted at the SAARC summit recently held in Colombo, will complement our efforts for greater regional cooperation in the fight against terrorism in South Asia.

Given their meagre human and financial resources, for many small States like the Maldives, combating the increased activities of international terrorism has been an uphill battle. Fulfilling the numerous obligations under the various Security Council and General Assembly resolutions has not been an easy task. At present, therefore, we are working with our neighbours and friendly countries, as well as concerned regional and international organizations, in strengthening our institutional capacity to ensure that our obligations under the various international and regional conventions and protocols are implemented and incorporated into our domestic laws.

In particular, I am happy to note the cooperation and guidance that we are receiving from the experts of the Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004). We are now in the process of submitting the necessary reports under Security Council resolutions 1373 (2001) and 1540 (2004).

We must remember that international terrorists are the enemies of international peace and security. The sole purpose of those non-State actors is to disrupt the harmonious operation of the international system. Those enemies of peace have no regard for religious creed, nor do they concern themselves with the safety of innocent people in the selfish pursuit of their agendas.

Fighting this global aberration requires our unwavering commitment, unity and cooperation. Identifying and addressing the root causes of terrorism will be critical in that fight. On behalf of my country, I assure the Assembly of our resolve to do our part in that joint effort to fight that international scourge.

Mr. Olago Owuor (Kenya): My delegation joins others in thanking the President of the Assembly for convening this meeting on an important subject that is dear to the hearts of many Kenyans. We also wish to thank him for his opening remarks and the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report (A/62/898) outlining the activities of the Organization in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. At the outset, we associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Guinea on behalf of the African Group.

International terrorism remains one of the most serious threats to global peace and stability. It undermines the values enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations with respect to human rights, the rule of law, the protection of civilians, tolerance among peoples and nations, and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Experience shows that terrorism knows no frontiers. It does not discriminate on the basis of religion, nationality, colour or sex. It makes no distinction between developed and developing countries. In a nutshell, no one and no country is immune from acts of terrorism.

We appreciate the efforts made by States Members at the national, regional and international levels to combat terrorism. We reiterate our support for the four pillars that form the basis of the Strategy for fighting terrorism and the work of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force to coordinate system-wide efforts to implement the Strategy. The Task Force has been useful in providing technical assistance to Member States in their quests to combat terrorism. However, it needs to be strengthened to be more efficient in its functioning. We therefore support its institutionalization and urge adequate resource allocation for it to function properly.

It is generally understood that however powerful or good a strategy may be, if it is not regularly reviewed and updated it may not yield good results. In view of that, and due to the importance Kenya attaches to this issue, we welcome this high-level meeting to review the implementation of the Strategy. We believe that the time is ripe for States to update the Strategy with regard to the outstanding gaps and elements in order to respond to changes.

In that regard, we urge States to marshal the necessary political goodwill in order to achieve an agreement on the definition of terrorism. There is also a need to strengthen inter-agency cooperation at both the national and the international levels, to raise awareness of the Strategy beyond the United Nations environment and line ministries at the national level.

Kenya has in the past suffered the devastating effects of three separate incidences of terrorist attacks. We have been a victim of that terrible crime against humanity. We remain in the forefront of efforts to support the international initiatives that seek a global solution to the menace. To that end, we have acceded to all international counter-terrorism conventions. We urge States that have not become parties to the legal counter-terrorism instruments to strive to do so.

We recognize that capacity-building is a core element of the global counter-terrorism effort. In that regard, we have, at the national level, put in place a number of judicial and administrative measures and structures to enhance our capacity to prevent the perpetration of terrorist acts within our territory. Those include the establishment of a national counter-terrorism centre to coordinate and analyse all information related to potential terrorist threats. The centre draws personnel from agencies and departments that are involved in combating terrorism and related crimes. In addition, there is a special anti-terrorism police unit to investigate and apprehend persons associated with terrorist activities. A suppression of terrorism bill is in the process of being republished in order to take on board views resulting from consultations with stakeholders, including civil society. The bill provides for clear investigative, preventive and prosecutorial mechanisms for dealing with individuals and organizations suspected to be involved in terrorist

activities. Draft legislation on money-laundering to provide for the freezing of funds and other financial assets and confiscation of property of persons or organizations associated with terrorist activities is pending conclusion of debate in Parliament. A special unit to prosecute terrorism and money-laundering cases and to deal with forfeiture of assets emanating from terrorist activities has been set up within the Attorney General's office.

On the regional front, a number of regional initiatives to foster cooperation between law enforcement and intelligence machinery are in place. East African security chiefs have met regularly to strategize on how to combat serious cross-border crimes, including armed robbery and terrorism. In fact, one such meeting just concluded in Addis Ababa. Emphasis has been placed on training and enhancing capacities, in addition to sharing information and best practices. Emphasis has also been placed on coordinating efforts to arrest known terrorists and other fugitives from the law.

In addition, widespread public education campaigns have been initiated to create awareness of the dangers of terrorism among the general populace. Despite those efforts, the region would still benefit from more support to step up its capacity to combat terrorism.

We recognize the role of the Assembly and the Security Council in the fight against terrorism. Security Council resolutions on counter-terrorism complement the legal regimes on the fight against terrorism and should be implemented, but they should be adopted through a fair process. We commend States for their cooperation with the Council and urge them to collaborate with the United Nations system.

We commend the Secretary-General for his planned initiative of convening a symposium on supporting victims of terrorism, which will be held on 9 September here at United Nations Headquarters. The symposium will provide an opportunity to share experiences in supporting victims of terrorism. We support the planned initiative and call for more commitment to and solidarity with the victims.

In conclusion, my delegation reaffirms its commitment to the ideals of the Strategy and looks forward to continuing to work with Member States and other stakeholders to realize our collective objectives.

Mr. Punkrasin (Thailand): On behalf of my Government, I would like to commend the President's efforts in promoting the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and in convening this meeting to review the implementation process. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the Strategy and to extend our sincere gratitude to Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala and his team for their valuable contribution to facilitating the draft outcome document for this agenda item.

The landmark adoption of the Strategy in 2006 provided us with a comprehensive framework for a coherent international response to terrorism. While the global fight against terrorism should be undertaken mainly within the multilateral sphere of the United Nations in accordance with relevant international law, such as the United Nations Charter and human rights law, the primary responsibility for implementing the Strategy lies with each Member State. Driven by that conviction, Thailand has committed and will remain committed to adopting and utilizing every means possible, at all levels, in order to achieve the aim of eradicating terrorism.

In that connection, allow me to take this opportunity to briefly share with the Assembly our contribution and the measures we have taken to implement the four pillars of the Strategy. A more detailed account of Thailand's contribution is attached to the written version of my statement, which is being distributed here today.

With regard to measures addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, it is our belief that socio-economic development is a vital factor in preventing the spread of radicalization and terrorism. Thailand is a strong supporter of the process that promotes interfaith dialogue and moderate religious leaders to counter the forces of radicalization. Special emphasis is given to exchanges and network-building among religious leaders, scholars and specialists. Our policy targets the media and education, particularly religious schools. The Ministry of Education works with religious leaders to ensure that school curriculums present ideas that are not prone to radicalization.

Under the heading of measures to prevent and combat terrorism, Thailand is proud of its steady

efforts towards becoming party to 9 out of the 13 United Nations anti-terrorism conventions and protocols, 3 of which we ratified or acceded to in 2007. Thailand also ratified the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Convention on Counter-Terrorism in February 2008.

In June 2007, our Prime Minister approved a regulation on the control of man-portable air defence systems, in line with the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation declaration made in Bangkok in 2003. The regulation imposes stricter controls on the possession of such systems and closer monitoring of their sale, transport and import-export and of the possibility that such weapons could fall into the hands of criminals and terrorist groups.

As a result of globalization, terrorists can now travel and mobilize their resources from one country to another more easily than ever. In an attempt to address those problems and to curb the risk of terrorist acts, Thailand has intensified its border and transport security and established many administrative and legislative instruments. Examples of such measures include the placing of the Personal Identification Secure Comparison and Evaluation System at major airports and border checkpoints. The National Assembly adopted an amended penal code in July 2007 that stipulates as criminal offences the making, forgery, distribution, sale and possession of illegal passports and other travel documents. The penalties for those offences have also been increased.

Moreover, in terms of financial regulations and assets freezing, our Anti-Money Laundering Act was amended in 2007 to broaden the scope of a definition of assets related to criminal offences to include terrorist financing.

Also important, Thailand promulgated the new Extradition Act B.E. 2551 (2008) on 30 January 2008 to expedite the process of extradition by stipulating certain conditions in which the extradition request can be made directly to Thailand's central authority, the Office of the Attorney General, bypassing diplomatic channels.

With regard to measures building the State's capacity to counter terrorism, Thailand attaches importance to international cooperation on capacity-building for the competent agencies that are responsible for counter-terrorism-related work. Thai officials regularly attend and participate in workshops, meetings and conferences at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels. The topics of such workshops include international terrorism, law enforcement, counter-radicalization, internet abuse, weapons smuggling, dual-use goods and explosives, winning the hearts and minds of the people and emergency response mechanisms.

Last but not least, in terms of defending human rights while combating terrorism, Thailand upholds its obligations under related international instruments on human rights, such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Turning to the content of the Strategy itself, Thailand is of the view that the Strategy is a living document that can be modified in parts to better reflect the latest situation and trends in terrorism and counter-terrorism actions. There should be an institutionalized review mechanism for the Strategy to keep it relevant and to keep Member States' information up to date regarding the implementation of the Strategy worldwide. We would support a regularized two-to-three-year review.

Thailand argues for more transparency in the process of data-collection by United Nations bodies. Member States should be informed of what the United Nations intends to do with the information that they provide upon its request. At times, there could be misunderstanding and misinterpretation of the information that the United Nations receives. That could become the basis for incorrect or inaccurate analysis, which could then lead to problems between Member States and the United Nations.

We think that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force should play a greater role in coordinating information among all United Nations agencies to minimize reporting fatigue on the part of Member States. Furthermore, the coordinating feature of the Task Force should perhaps extend to expert groups established under the mandate of various Security Council resolutions on terrorism, such as the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, under resolution 1373 (2001), and the Monitoring Team, under resolution 1267 (1999). If the Task Force

is to be more meaningful, it should have a more focused and clearly spelled-out mandate; if it is to be more effective, more resources should be made available. Thailand therefore argues for more funding for the Task Force, but that should be based on its measurable outputs and contributions.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): My delegation wishes to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/62/898), which reviews the activities of the United Nations system in implementing the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Indonesia would also like to extend its sincere appreciation to Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala for his strenuous efforts in facilitating the Strategy review consultations. It is our hope that the draft resolution emanating from those consultations will be adopted very soon by consensus.

Before I continue, my delegation would like to align itself with the statement delivered yesterday by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Indonesia made a not-insignificant contribution to the adoption and launching of the Strategy two years ago. As a nation that had suffered immensely at the hands of terrorists, we were deeply convinced that a mechanism of this nature was critical to the response of the international community to the scourge of terrorism. That is why we welcome this review debate. The coming together of Member States to agree on the Strategy gives us encouragement that the menace will be overcome. We believe that we need to explore every type of cooperation at various levels to implement the Strategy and its plan of action to the fullest extent.

In the past two years, Indonesia has taken a variety of initiatives at the domestic level in the implementation of the Strategy. For instance, we enacted a counter-terrorism law to provide the legal basis for the investigation, prosecution and punishment of acts of terrorism, including their financing.

In addition, we have upgraded our counter-terrorism measures and the capabilities of local law enforcement bodies, including the ability of the police to intervene in terrorism-related incidents. Over 410 suspects have been arrested since the Bali terrorist bombing in October 2002. More significantly, of that number, 269 have been convicted, while the remaining cases are still before the judiciary.

Furthermore, we have embarked on bilateral, regional and multilateral measures, as required by the Strategy. That is because we believe that no stone should be left unturned to ensure that the course of action we have embarked on is successful. The challenge before us is to implement the comprehensive measures outlined in the four pillars of the Strategy. Indonesia has no intention of doing less.

At the bilateral level, Indonesia has concluded counter-terrorism cooperation agreements with several countries, particularly neighbours such as Australia, Malaysia, Thailand, the Philippines and Singapore.

At the regional level, Indonesia spearheaded cooperation in law enforcement, border control and the enactment of legislative frameworks for counter-terrorism. The Bali Counter-Terrorism Process, for instance, has established strong bonds of collaboration among legal and law enforcement practitioners in the region. The Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation, which was set up by Indonesia and Australia, has provided structured training for law enforcement officers in the region. The contribution of Indonesia is also evident in the regional efforts to bring about the conclusion of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Convention on Counter-Terrorism. That Convention has provided a framework for regional cooperation to counter, prevent and suppress terrorism, and for deepening cooperation among law enforcement agencies and relevant authorities of the parties. In addition, Indonesia has also sponsored and participated in a number of initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue among civilizations bilaterally, regionally and multilaterally.

At the multilateral level, Indonesia has, inter alia, shown unwavering commitment to promoting the effective implementation, legitimacy and credibility of the sanctions regime under resolution 1267 (1999). We are fully committed to the joint efforts to improve its procedures in order to facilitate its implementation at the national level by Member States. Moreover, Indonesia has been very active in promoting the effort to improve fair and clear procedures to protect the rights of individuals affected by the Al-Qaida sanctions regime. Indonesia highlights the importance of ensuring the protection of the individual's rights to be informed and to be heard and the right to review by a fairer and more effective mechanism.

Those efforts against terrorism, it must be stressed, can only be successfully carried out if the measures agreed upon within the Strategy are consistently implemented in a balanced and comprehensive manner.

My delegation believes that those multifaceted, integrated and coordinated measures should be fully undertaken by all stakeholders. Together, they will address the conditions that are conducive to the spread of terrorism, prevent and combat terrorism, build States' capacities to prevent and combat terrorism and thereby strengthen the role of the United Nations system and ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for the fight against terrorism.

It has always been the view of Indonesia that only such an all-embracing approach can help us combat terrorism effectively. Beyond that, we must underline the need to reject the association of terrorism with particular religions, civilizations, cultures or ethnicities. Terrorism is a human challenge that respects no national borders or peoples. Only together can we, all of us, combat it successfully.

While the delegation of Indonesia looks forward to a consistent, transparent, comprehensive and balanced implementation of the Strategy, we also look forward to negotiating a comprehensive and balanced convention that respects the principles of international law and humanitarian law, as well as national sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The Indonesian delegation welcomes the draft resolution on the review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, contained in document A/62/L.48, which strongly condemns acts of terrorism and reaffirms the multifaceted cooperation against that international threat.

Finally, we would also like to commend the initiative of the Secretary-General to organize a symposium on supporting victims of terrorism by inviting victims, civil society and experts together here on 9 September. For Indonesia, that initiative is an important reminder to all of us not only of the heinous nature of terrorism but also of the challenge to care for its victims and not to leave them to face the future alone. We believe that the symposium will offer us many lessons, as experienced by the victims and eyewitnesses of inhuman acts, and help us to appreciate our role in preventing the menace in the future.

Mr. Palihakkara (Sri Lanka): I thank you, sir, for convening this plenary meeting to consider the important agenda item 118, "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy", and action on draft resolution A/62/L.48. This is indeed an opportunity for the first review of the Strategy. I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General for their opening remarks. Our thanks go as well to the facilitator, Ambassador Rosenthal of Guatemala, for his untiring efforts towards making agreement on the outcome document possible.

This meeting takes place against the backdrop of the increasing frequency and intensity of acts of terrorism that are threatening peace and security all over the world. Our deliberations and consideration of the draft resolution today are therefore timely.

It has been two years since we adopted the Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which provides an internationally agreed approach to countering terrorism. It also provides a framework for taking individual as well as collective initiatives aimed at addressing the menace while maintaining respect for the well-established norms of the rule of law and human rights. The Strategy acknowledges that the problem of terrorism is seriously undermining the foundations of democracy, the rule of law and public order.

Even if the Strategy may not represent the best interests of all, it is nevertheless a set of guidelines that has been arrived at by consensus, thereby accommodating different strands of views, concerns and interests. In that sense, it enjoys the respect of all States that are committed to implementing it.

The threat to global peace and security posed by terrorism has serious consequences for humankind as never before. It causes economic and political instability in States. It destroys the traditional ethos on which States and societies are founded. It also seeks to destabilize societies, subvert established order and — most importantly — deny people their basic rights and freedoms.

Terrorism has assumed international dimensions, as we all know, through its destructive networks of violence, fund-raising, smuggling of illicit arms,

including possible mass destruction capabilities, and other forms of transnational crimes. It was aptly described by a former Secretary-General as a supranational subversive threat to peace and security within and among States. A succession of Security Council resolutions has reaffirmed the danger.

Democracies have become especially vulnerable to the scourge of terrorism today. The basic guarantees of fundamental rights and freedoms, as well as the political space available to different actors in a democracy, are increasingly exploited by elements that are bent on achieving their political ends by violent and terrorist means. Addressing the General Assembly at its sixty-second session, the President of Sri Lanka stated:

> "Even as we are gathered here, State sovereignty, civil society and the rule of law are increasingly being threatened by terrorism and other illegal and illicit activities in many countries. We need to be vigilant about these activities." *(A/62/PV.5, p. 2)*

The President made those remarks as he urged the United Nations to expedite the process of finalizing a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. It is time that we made extra efforts to conclude that draft convention. Sri Lanka, as the Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on that subject, would certainly redouble its efforts, with the cooperation of all Member States, to make progress in that important endeavour. Our deliberations here, we hope, will send a strong message of support for that task. We are pleased, therefore, that the draft resolution calls upon Member States to make every effort to conclude the convention.

The President's remarks also arose in the context of some misconceptions to classify acts of terrorism into tolerable and intolerable categories. "Terrorism anywhere is terrorism. There is nothing good in terrorism", (ibid.) the President said. My delegation is glad that this perspective has been recognized in operative paragraph 1 of draft resolution A/62/L.48.

In implementing the Strategy, we need to call for the greater cooperation of all States and, of course, other actors to make it clear to terrorist groups that there will be no space for terrorism to flourish. The United Nations is well placed to lead that concerted global campaign against terrorism as an entity promoting respect for the rule of law and enjoying the legitimacy and confidence of the global community. Such a concerted global campaign, supported by national and regional measures, will go a long way towards evolving comprehensive practical approaches to strengthening global peace and security, as well as institutions of democracy and governance.

While system-wide coherence is an issue which concerns all aspects of the Organization's work, especially the different mechanisms and organs of the United Nations, it needs to be emphasized that coherence is also critical to our efforts to make United Nations action to combat terrorism more effective. We are told that the Strategy is being internalized by different United Nations organs, departments and divisions. It is imperative that this process be further strengthened by relating it to the processes of the Security Council, especially in the context of implementation of Council resolutions such as resolution 1373 (2001).

The ongoing interaction between the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate and Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, as well as other programmes and agencies, should be encouraged and intensified with a view to synergizing United Nations action and responses to the challenges of terrorism. They have a vital role in building capacity among vulnerable States to implement the Strategy, both individually and collectively. However, to be effective, the Task Force should encompass a broader base of the General Assembly membership.

In advocating strong measures against terrorism, Sri Lanka shares the view that terrorism cannot, and should not, be associated with any religion, nationality, civilization or ethnic group, and that those attributions cannot be used to justify terrorism or counter-terrorism measures. While terrorism should be confronted directly, from whatever quarter it may emanate, for this scourge to be eradicated all States should refrain from extending political, diplomatic, moral or material support to terrorists.

Sri Lanka supports the draft resolution and hopes that all Member States will work together to implement and add value to the Strategy, consistent with our national and international treaty obligations, in order to combat terrorism at all levels.

Mr. Neritani (Albania): At the outset, I should like to join colleagues in expressing Albania's appreciation to the President of the Assembly for organizing and chairing this important meeting, and to

the facilitator, Ambassador Rosenthal of Guatemala, for all his efforts and the results achieved.

Albania allies itself with the statement delivered by France on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add few brief remarks on implementation at the national level.

Terrorism continues to be one of the most serious threats to international peace and security. Criminal and unjustifiable in all circumstances, it is a threat to all States and peoples. It knows no borders. It is a global threat that requires a global and comprehensive response. The United Nations continues to have a unique role to play in the global fight against terrorism. We appreciate its efforts to support implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, both through its individual departments, specialized agencies, funds and programmes and through the Counter-Terrorism Task Force, which may need further support.

Albania has positioned itself in the forefront of countries fighting terrorism. Albania has ratified most of the United Nations counter-terrorism conventions and protocols and therefore has taken all necessary steps to adopt the domestic legislation. At the same time, we are doing our best to implement all relevant resolutions related to international terrorism. Preventive measures are being taken in the fields of legislation, border control and finance.

Concerning the first pillar, I wish to emphasize the very important efforts undertaken in several areas. These include intercultural and interreligious dialogue, in a country with special historical values of coexistence and extremely good relations between three different religions; utmost efforts to lower the social impact of important and necessary reforms; increasing human rights standards; and playing a very constructive and mature role in addressing regional challenges with a modern and forward-looking approach.

On the legislative front, to strengthen the fight against terrorism-related activities, some recent amendments to the criminal code are intended to tackle, where applicable, fund-raising, the recruitment and training of persons engaged in terrorism-related activities or the financing of terrorism, the incitement of propaganda for terrorism-related purposes, and training in the illegal use or production of weapons and dangerous substances.

Another important law, adopted in 2008, is the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism. In cooperation with international experts, the State police has prepared and introduced a draft document, the National Strategy against Terrorism. The necessary adequate institutional structuring and framework have been established to cope with the challenging reality and generally acceptable higher standards.

Albania continues to cooperate extensively with its regional and global counterparts. That has had a tremendous positive impact on our joint obligations and efforts. Cooperation and coordination with other specialized agencies and/or bodies in the regional and global spectrums will continue in the future. The regular exchange of best practices and especially the assistance offered to our relevant agencies are highly appreciated and valued important components in our joint engagement.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our firm commitment to cooperating with the regional and international factors in the fight against terrorism and, hence, in the successful implementation of the United Nations Strategy.

Mr. Mahiga (United Republic of Tanzania): Even at this late date, at the outset I would like to express our deep sorrow and extend our profound condolences to the people and Government of Zambia on the passing away of His Excellency Levy Patrick Mwanawasa last month. We also extend our sympathies to the bereaved family. President Mwanawasa will be remembered for his commitment and promotion of democratic governance in Zambia and Africa and as an ardent supporter of African integration, the United Nations and multilateralism.

On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, let me express our heartfelt appreciation to the President of the Assembly for hosting and steering this meeting. The United Republic of Tanzania is confident that, under his leadership, this meeting will result in a consensus outcome and a very forward-looking document that will advance the cause of combating international terrorism.

Tanzania reaffirms its commitment and readiness to implement the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its four pillars. We commend the work of the Counter-Terrorism Task Force of the Secretariat for advancing the thinking on the challenges

of terrorism and implementation of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy by Member States. The Task Force needs to be strengthened and institutionalized.

This contemporary threat to international peace and security, targeting innocent civilians, demands conventional as well as unconventional responses, which we must develop under the leadership of the United Nations. Indeed, terrorism threatens the values of our civilizations, which underlie our common humanity. Thus the need for collective and coordinated global efforts against terrorism under the leadership of the United Nations cannot be overemphasized.

Tanzania has made modest but significant strides in preventing and countering terrorism. We have instituted legislation in the national statute that criminalizes and punishes terrorism and related crimes. Corresponding administrative measures have also been put in place to complement those legal measures and to implement the counter-terrorism act. We have also established community policing structures to promote awareness and heighten vigilance among our population. The details of the measures undertaken by the Government of Tanzania will feature in the national implementation report, to be submitted to the Secretariat soon.

Despite all the measures undertaken to date at the national level, the global nature of the threat and its evolving unpredictable manifestation in our region and beyond have overstretched the national resources for deployment against it. A national strategy can be successful only if it is linked to regional strategies and to a larger global strategy.

In the same vein, the legislation that Tanzania has produced needs to be complemented by similar instruments developed by other Member States, especially those in our neighbourhood. Such measures could ensure that terrorists do not find safe havens in countries that have not yet criminalized terrorism. We are mindful of the need to respect and safeguard human rights in implementing our national counter-terrorism strategy as well as our regional strategies. It is imperative that human rights be respected by all countries in the pursuit of security and in addressing the challenges emanating from terrorism.

Another area that requires United Nations and global cooperation against terrorism is the re-establishment of States under stress that have weak institutions and weak governmental authority. In such States, a security vacuum exists in which terrorists can hide and plan terrorist actions. Given the restrictions of international law and logistical and other constraints, it is not possible to apprehend terrorists through standard police work. It is therefore essential to help States in such situations to establish political authority and State structures with which adjacent States and the international community can cooperate to combat terrorism and related crimes. In such endeavours, information exchange is vital to combat terrorism and develop collective strategies.

In the light of those issues, the United Republic of Tanzania wishes to propose that, with regard to States experiencing political stress and recurring conflicts, counter-terrorism efforts to assist those States should always be carried out within the framework of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, but with their consent. We further propose that actions in that regard include assistance to neighbouring States in dealing appropriately with mixed flows of civilians across international borders, giving protection to those who deserve it while screening out those elements that pose security risks owing to suspected criminal and terrorist activity.

Finally, I should point out that, in post-conflict situations, the issue of security sector reform, including the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, should be adequately financed at the national and subregional levels to prevent ex-combatants from being subjected to recruitment by terrorist networks. The role of the Peacebuilding Commission in advising States on post-conflict strategies and in mobilizing resources for rebuilding war-torn societies and building new institutions is critical to pre-empt terrorist recruitment, especially among unemployed young people in the volatile environment of the post-conflict situation, where there are multitudes, armies of unemployed young people who are vulnerable to terrorist propaganda and recruitment.

Mr. Danesh-Yazdi (Islamic Republic of Iran): The delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting. My delegation appreciates the efforts of Ambassador Rosenthal of Guatemala in facilitating the negotiations on the draft resolution on the first review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

My delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the

Organization of the Islamic Conference group and fully supports the principled positions that that group has consistently taken on the issue of terrorism.

The adoption by consensus of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy on 8 September 2006 indicated the resolve of the international community to tackle terrorism in an inclusive and integrated manner. The Islamic Republic of Iran joined the consensus as a demonstration of its firm commitment to the collective fight against terrorism, despite its reservations concerning a number of issues. We believed, for example, that the Strategy fell short of sufficiently addressing the root causes of terrorism as well as situations that might be abused in order to nurture terrorist violence. It has been crystal-clear that the unlawful use of force, aggression and foreign occupation provide the most fertile ground for fostering and fuelling mass violence and acts of terrorism. The Strategy also failed to tackle the problem of State terrorism. Nonetheless, as a living document, it could be improved, and its deficiencies should be rectified by examining and updating it.

The Strategy is based on the categorical condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomsoever, wherever and for whatever purposes. The Strategy's call for the elimination of conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism is a realistic approach to addressing that multifaceted phenomenon. It is imperative to note that terrorism cannot be eliminated if the environment that breeds terrorism — including foreign occupation, injustice and exclusion — is allowed to thrive. The task now before us is to implement all four pillars of the Strategy in a consistent and balanced manner.

A consensual legal definition of terrorism would contribute greatly to the successful implementation of the Strategy. In that regard, we reiterate the importance of General Assembly resolution 46/51, which reaffirms

> "the inalienable right to self-determination and independence of all peoples living under colonial and racist regimes and other forms of alien domination and foreign occupation, and upholding the legitimacy of their struggle, in particular the struggle of national liberation movements, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter and the Declaration on Principles of International Law".

Undoubtedly, the responsibility for the implementation of the Strategy lies with the Member States. The Task Force is entrusted with coordinating the efforts of United Nations bodies and agencies, which are mandated to have a counter-terrorism component with a view to developing Member States' capacity and promoting the overall effectiveness of United Nations counter-terrorism efforts. We stress that the Task Force, in carrying out all its activities, should be bound by the mandate given to it by the General Assembly. In that regard, the Task Force should address the concerns expressed by many countries on various occasions regarding the criteria used for the establishment of working groups as well as the use of politically loaded notions, which were intentionally avoided in the Strategy.

The Islamic Republic of Iran unequivocally and categorically condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. As a vivid victim of terrorism, we firmly believe that the killing of innocent civilians, whatever the motivation behind it, is a criminal and abhorrent act. We also believe that State terrorism is the gravest, most dangerous and most destructive form of terrorism.

We are concerned by the increase in terrorist acts in our surrounding regions, mainly brought about or triggered by the ongoing conflicts imposed by non-regional powers. That situation has provided a feeding ground for terrorist groups and elements to survive and escalate their terrorist activities. Iran has consistently warned against the continued presence and activities of certain terrorist groups in some of its neighbouring countries under the protection of foreign forces.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has spared no effort in fighting terrorism. We stand ready to cooperate with other countries, especially our neighbours, and with the relevant United Nations bodies. Iran has been keen to improve its overall capacity to combat terrorism and crime. In that context, a comprehensive bill against terrorism has been drafted. The bill is under consideration by the relevant bodies for submission to Parliament. Moreover, the Anti-Money-Laundering Act, which has been in force since early 2008, provides a necessary and sufficient legal tool to prevent and fight the laundering of the proceeds of any crime. We have also benefited from the technical assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in fighting terrorism and crime. In 2007, a workshop

on preventing and combating terrorism was co-organized by the UNODC and the Iranian judiciary.

A number of initiatives have been taken at the bilateral and regional levels, particularly among the members of the Economic Cooperation Organization, to promote cooperation against terrorism and transnational organized crime, especially drug trafficking, given the fact that drug trafficking has been used as a main financial source by some terrorist groups in the region.

More than 80 per cent of Afghanistan's opium is trafficked across Iran's border, much of it in transit to Europe. For decades, Iran has been at the forefront of a full-scale war against transnational drug mafiosi. More than 4,000 Iranian law enforcement personnel have lost their lives and billions of dollars have been spent to suppress drug traffickers, and to interdict opium shipments. According to UNODC's 2008 World Drug Report, more than 80 per cent of world opium seizures in 2006 were in Iran. We urge the international community to pay more serious attention to that issue. We have shouldered a great burden, largely without receiving the minimum assistance from the international community, but we should make it clear that no country can tackle the scourge single-handedly.

In our efforts to uproot terrorism, due attention should also be paid to all ways and means that may be used by terrorist groups and elements to pursue their dangerous activities. In that context, we share the concern that terrorist groups may increasingly use the Internet for pursuing their criminal activities, including for identifying potential targets, given the easy access to images and exact maps of infrastructure facilities, as well as State facilities and other places of public use.

Terrorism is a despicable crime that should be rejected in its entirety. Selectivity and double standards in dealing with terrorist groups are real impediments to the elimination of terrorism. Likewise, linking terrorism with any religion, nationality or culture must be rejected and stopped. Such an unwise approach towards terrorism will only lead to distrust, hatred and division among nations. It is imperative to redouble our collective efforts to promote dialogue and tolerance among civilizations and cultures and to contest suspicion towards and defamation of religions.

In conclusion, we should not give in to terrorists by sacrificing our high principles, including the rule of law, through resort to arbitrary persecution and unlawful and/or excessive countermeasures. The rule of law, at both the national and international levels, and respect for basic human rights and fundamental freedoms, as well as international humanitarian law, must be our guiding principles in fighting terrorism. The fact that the Strategy has appropriately made human rights the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism indicates the high importance of complying with international law, in particular human rights law, while countering terrorism.

However, the systematic abuse of counter-terrorism measures in recent years — such as the practice of detaining terrorist suspects in secret detention, which deprives them of their basic right to appear before a competent court and violates their right to a fair trial and due process of law; the widespread use of torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment in the name of fighting terrorism; and improper transfers of terrorist suspects, including so-called renditions — has caused serious concern in the international community. Those are but a few manifestations of an alarming trend that has overshadowed the international campaign against terrorism.

Mr. Ayoob (Afghanistan): At the outset, I would like to thank the presidency for convening the first review meeting of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. My delegation congratulates Ambassador Gert Rosenthal, Permanent Representative of Guatemala to the United Nations, on his excellent work to reach consensus for the adoption of the draft resolution entitled "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" (A/62/L.48).

At this juncture, I would like to associate myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Pakistan yesterday on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Afghanistan, as a main victim and front-line fighter against terrorism, strongly condemns all acts, methods and practices of terrorism as a clear violation against the fundamental rights of humankind and as an attack against freedom, democracy, progress and civilization. We deeply believe that terrorism can never be justified, irrespective of its motivations, objectives, forms and manifestations.

Afghanistan supports the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which united all 192 Member States behind their common goal to undertake

a set of concrete measures to address terrorism in all its aspects. In that regard, my delegation would like to reiterate its support for the work of the Ad Hoc Committee established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 51/210 of 17 December 1996 to finalize the text of and conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism.

Seven years ago, when the Taliban and Al-Qaida terrorist networks and foreign military forces occupied and ruled my country and Afghanistan became a safe haven for international terrorism, our country posed a serious threat to global and regional peace, stability and security. Through unprecedented united international action against terrorism and the firm determination of the Afghan people, terrorism was defeated in Afghanistan and a new chapter was opened in the history of my country.

Although, with the continued assistance of our friends in the international community, we have made tremendous progress in the past seven years, it is undeniable that the world, our region and Afghanistan in particular continue to suffer from the results of terrorist attacks. Unfortunately, terrorists continue to commit their crimes, and the war against international terrorism continues. The new reality is not only that Afghanistan is no longer a safe haven for international terrorism but also that it is an active front-line fighter and a committed member of the international community in the war against terrorism. Terrorist networks are increasingly recruiting and training terrorists and exporting them to Afghanistan. They are responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent civilians and for the burning and destruction of schools, health clinics and hospitals. They are trying to deprive our population of its fundamental rights.

Bearing in mind that the Counter-Terrorism Strategy must be implemented in all its aspects, in the case of Afghanistan my delegation believes that the Strategy's capacity-building pillar is an essential element in the global endeavour to help needy countries in their efforts to implement all of the Strategy's pillars and to combat terrorism.

Afghanistan has established an inter-ministerial working group under the chairmanship of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to coordinate the implementation of the Strategy and other international conventions and protocols, including General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to international terrorism. In order to strengthen the capacity of that institution to implement the Counter-Terrorism Strategy in an integrated manner, the inter-ministerial working group needs legal and technical assistance from the United Nations and other relevant international organizations.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Counter-Terrorism Branch of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other United Nations agencies for providing technical, legal and logistical assistance to the relevant ministries and counter-terrorism bodies in Afghanistan. We request that UNODC, UNDP and other international organizations assist the inter-ministerial working group to build the necessary capacity and to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy.

Afghanistan has joined all existing international conventions and protocols against terrorism and has strongly committed itself to the implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to international terrorism. In that regard, we have instituted several counter-terrorism and anti-narcotics legislative, administrative and security measures. These include the establishment of Afghanistan's financial transaction and report analysis centre as a new anti-money-laundering unit within the Central Bank of Afghanistan; the adoption of laws to combat the financing of terrorism and to combat terrorist crime; the ratification of the United Nations Convention against Corruption; the establishment of the National Peace Consolidation Commission of Afghanistan; and the establishment of the council of scholars and religious leaders to affirm that terrorism is anti-peace and anti-Islamic.

Afghanistan is currently working closely with the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1267 (1999) and other bodies established pursuant to Security Council resolutions to strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations sanctions regime against Al-Qaida and the Taliban. Afghanistan recently provided its report to the secretariat of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to Council resolution 1540 (2004). For the past two years, Afghanistan has provided the 1267 Committee and the Counter-Terrorism Committee with updated information and proposals on new listings and de-listings and on the freezing of bank accounts of members of the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Cognizant of the fact that money derived from narcotics is a source of

financing for terrorists, Afghanistan is considering providing the 1267 Committee with a list of drug smugglers.

We would like to request that Member States that have not yet done so become parties to the existing international conventions and protocols against terrorism and to fulfil their obligations with regard to the implementation of General Assembly and Security Council resolutions relating to international terrorism, in particular vis-à-vis the 1267 Committee, on sanctions against the Taliban and Al-Qaida.

In conclusion, terrorism is a serious global threat to international peace and security. Serious and sincere global actions are required to combat that menace. As His Excellency Mr. Hâmid Karzai, President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, said in his speech to the summit meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 28 August 2008:

> "We call for the strengthening of international unity to realize the comprehensive strategy of the war against terrorism. That strategy will not be successful unless the international community acts seriously to destroy the political and military sources of terrorism and the entities that produce and nurture terrorists."

Mr. Soler Torrijos (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (A/62/898) on the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as to acknowledge the efforts of Ambassador Rosenthal of Guatemala in facilitating the preparation of the draft resolution we will adopt today. In addition to informing the Assembly about the measures adopted by my country to implement the Strategy, I should like to take this opportunity to make some general comments about the implementation of the Strategy.

We believe that the adoption of the Strategy, in 2006, was a milestone in the international community's efforts to eradicate terrorism. The Strategy's success, in contrast to other efforts in that field, is due to the comprehensive manner adopted in addressing one of the greatest contemporary threats to international peace and security. The Strategy is an exceedingly ambitious undertaking that requires tremendous effort by Member States and the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations and civil society alike. However, given the absence of predictable funding from the Organization's regular budget, it is clear that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force's implementation of the Strategy is limited.

We note that the Task Force, which is ably led by Mr. Robert Orr, has been able to support Member States in developing legal instruments to prevent and combat terrorism. We also note that information regarding the resources available to combat terrorism has been systematized. Member States that have requested it have also had their capacity to combat terrorism evaluated. Among the successes of the Task Force is the establishment of nine working groups focused on various areas in which the United Nations could provide added value. Despite the criticism that has been levelled against their functioning, we believe that this initiative aims at implementing the Strategy in a balanced way within the limited resources available.

The President took the Chair.

The outcome of the work of the groups will allow us to identify best practices and existing gaps in the implementation of some of the provisions of resolution 60/288 and to determine the most effective mechanisms to disseminate the best practices and to bridge the gaps.

We also welcome the work of the Task Force, particularly in its dedication to ensuring the rule of law in the implementation of the Strategy and to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We stress that respect for human rights is an essential principle of the United Nations Charter and should therefore be practised by all its constituent bodies in all their actions.

The provision of the draft resolution before the Assembly that requests the institutionalization of the Task Force and governs its interactions with Member States is an important step towards the more effective implementation of the Strategy and meeting the needs of Member States. Nevertheless, we recognize that we must be realistic and that it is impossible for the Task Force to fully implement the mandate entrusted to it in the Strategy if it is not provided with sufficient resourcing through the regular budget. The next time we examine that issue, Members must consider concrete measures to resolve the situation. Otherwise, we will have to accept that only those provisions that are in the interest of donors can be implemented.

In conclusion, we want to express our hope that, during the sixty-third session to begin later this month, the Ad Hoc Committee will make progress in its negotiations with a view to adopting a comprehensive convention on international terrorism. That would be the next milestone towards which the United Nations could make headway.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I welcome this opportunity to express my delegation's satisfaction for the initiative of convening of today's debate to consider the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, demonstrating the importance the General Assembly attaches to the follow-up, implementation and updating of the Strategy.

We express our deep gratitude to Ambassador Gert Rosenthal for his efficient coordination of the negotiations on draft resolution A/62/L.48 to be adopted shortly. This meeting also reflects the need for the international community to join in a multilateral response to the threat against the collective and individual peace and security through this universal body with its greatest political legitimacy to meet that challenge head-on in the twenty-first century.

My country reaffirms its outright condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, regardless of who perpetrates it and for what purpose. Similarly, El Salvador reaffirms the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and its four pillars, which represent an ongoing basis for a more effective approach to all issues related to international terrorism.

In that context, we thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/62/898, which highlights the efforts that the United Nations as a whole is making to implement the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, with particular reference to the practical recommendations and strategies contained therein, which constitute a solid basis for elaborating a plan of action for the next few years. El Salvador feels it is important to bolster the role of the United Nations in the implementation of the Strategy, especially with regard to cooperation with regional and subregional organizations and assistance to countries in capacity-building.

It is appropriate that, two years after the launch of the Global Strategy, the work of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force has come to represent a concrete step towards fulfilling the objectives of the Strategy, as called for in paragraph 3 (b) of resolution 60/288. El Salvador also recognizes the importance of promoting and protecting human rights and the fundamental freedoms of all while combating all forms and manifestations of terrorism in the context of a strengthened rule of law.

Against that backdrop, my country supports the draft resolution contained in document A/62/L.48 and entitled "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy" because it reflects the political consensus that the Member States have reached in terms of the follow-up, implementation and updating of the Strategy. All of that is enshrined in the general objective to create a global counter-terrorism mechanism.

At the national level, the El Salvador Government has decided to breathe new life into its inter-institutional group against terrorism in order to give stronger direction to the prevention and implementation of measures in line with the pillars of the Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. Similarly, our country is currently implementing a master plan for civic security that includes areas for intervention in police matters, criminal prosecution, legislation, civil society participation, the prison system, deterrence, the justice system, prevention, rehabilitation and international cooperation.

Our national civil police has designed and is implementing Plan SARISSA, the objective of which is to develop a strategy to reduce crime rates, improve the perception of safety and provide effective and accessible police services. As for security and national defence, the armed forces of El Salvador have anti-terrorism contingency plans that enable it to respond to any threat of that nature. In so doing, it can provide for the security of its citizens. Those plans have been made in accordance with the National Defence Law.

As for domestic capacity-building, allow me to note that, in March and April, with the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the Organization of American States Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism, a workshop was convened to consider terrorism prevention, counter-terrorism, the financing of terrorism, the legal framework and instruments for international cooperation. At the subregional level, the presidents of Central America and Mexico, in December 2007 in Guatemala City, adopted a security strategy for Central America and Mexico, which includes the fight against

organized crime, drug trafficking, gangs, illegal arms trafficking, terrorism and corruption.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the political will of the Government of El Salvador to continue to implement and provide effective follow-up to the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which is an essential component of the strengthening of national, regional and international actions to prevent and combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.

Mr. Saleh (Lebanon): At the outset, my delegation would like to express its appreciation to you, Mr. President, for holding the first biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

My delegation would like to associate itself with the statements made by the representative of Kuwait on behalf of the Group of Arab States and by the representative of Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of the Islamic Conference. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala for the efforts he made during the Strategy review consultations, which helped Member States to reach consensus on the draft resolution before us.

My delegation would like to reaffirm its strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and its support for all efforts to eradicate that scourge. Lebanon remains deeply committed to the international efforts to counter terrorism and believes that the fight against that scourge requires concerted efforts among all Member States. In that regard, cooperation at the regional and international levels is a key element for the success of that fight.

Lebanon has ratified 11 out of the 13 United Nations counter-terrorism conventions and is in the process of ratifying the remaining ones.

My delegation would like to reaffirm its support for the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and to call for its implementation in a holistic and integrated manner, with equal emphasis on its four pillars. We would like to stress the need to maintain the Strategy as a living document open to examination and updating on a regular basis and to emphasize the centrality of the role of the General Assembly in combating terrorism, since it is the only United Nations organ that enjoys universal membership.

We believe that the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy should address the root causes of terrorism, including the unlawful use of force; that it should contain a definition of terrorism; that it should condemn State terrorism in the strongest terms; and that it should strongly differentiate between terrorism and the legitimate right of peoples to resist foreign occupation. In fact, General Assembly resolution 46/51 stresses the need for such differentiation.

Furthermore, that distinction is duly recognized in international law, international humanitarian law and Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations. It is a very important distinction, because one of the basic aspects of terrorism is that it is an indiscriminate act of violence. In our response, however, we should not be indiscriminate.

My delegation would like to emphasize that terrorism should not be associated with any religion, race, ethnic group, nationality or civilization. Here, we would like to express our support for the proposal of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, that an international centre to combat international terrorism be established under the aegis of the United Nations.

My delegation believes that the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy lies first and foremost in the hands of Member States and that the relevant United Nations entities should play a supportive but not substitutive role. In that respect, it should be noted that the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force was established under the capacity-building section of the Strategy and was intended to ensure overall coordination and coherence of the counter-terrorism efforts of the United Nations system and to provide assistance to Member States. My delegation would like to stress the importance of the ownership and leadership of Member States with regard to the implementation of the Strategy. Accordingly, we support the institutionalization of the Task Force within the Secretariat, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 60/288.

We believe that the responses of Member States to terrorism should always be governed by the logic of rights. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that all of us always comply with our obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law, in the formulation and implementation of our counter-terrorism measures.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

Before we proceed to the consideration of draft resolution A/62/L.48, I would like to inform the Assembly that operative paragraph 14 has been slightly revised and now reads as follows:

> "Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-fourth session an item entitled 'The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy' in order to undertake in two years an examination of the report of the Secretary-General requested in paragraph 13 above, as well as the implementation of the Strategy on the part of Member States and to consider updating it to respond to changes".

We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/62/L.48, as orally revised. In that connection, I now give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Botnaru (Department for General Assembly and Conference Management): In connection with draft resolution A/62/L.48, entitled "The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy", I wish to place on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

By operative paragraphs 11 and 12 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would

> "[Urge] the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements to carry out the institutionalization of the Task Force, in accordance with resolution 60/288, in order to ensure overall coordination and coherence in the counter-terrorism efforts of the United Nations system",

and

> "[Decide] to interact with the Task Force on a regular basis, in order to receive briefings and reports on its current and future work, assess the work being undertaken on the Strategy implementation efforts, including the work of the Task Force, and offer policy guidance".

With regard to the institutionalization of the Task Force, it is the intention of the Secretary-General to continue to address the staffing requirements of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force secretariat from within existing resources. Concerning the interaction with the Task Force, in keeping with the pattern of previous years, the Secretariat would provide regular briefings and reports on the activities of the Task Force as necessary, when requested.

Accordingly, should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/62/L.48, there would be no financial implications under the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/62/L.48, as orally revised.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.48 as orally revised?

Draft resolution A/62/L.48, as orally revised, was adopted (resolution 62/272).

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 118?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.